



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

MARCH MEETING.

THE stated meeting was held on Thursday, the 9th instant, at three o'clock, P.M.; the PRESIDENT, Mr. LODGE, in the chair.

The record of the last meeting was read and approved; and the Librarian reported the list of donors to the Library since the last meeting.

The Cabinet-Keeper reported gifts as follows:

Engraving, by John Chorley, from an original painting of Governor John Brooks by James Frothingham, from Mr. Kellen; photograph of a rare French print of Jonathan Russell, from Miss Mary Rivers, of Milton; photograph of a painting of John Adams, and two photographs of Congress Hall and the Senate Chamber, in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, from Wilfred Jordan; medals of the Boston Latin School, 1828, 1829, 1830, and 1831, the Franklin School medal, and the Phi Beta Kappa medal, all of Dr. Thomas Mayo Brewer (H. C. 1835), and seven coins, from Miss Lucy S. Brewer, of Brookline; and badges from the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks, and from the Boston Chamber of Commerce.

The Editor reported the gift, from the children of Charles Deane, of his correspondence and papers on historical subjects. Mr. Deane's position among investigators, his long and active membership in this Society, from 1849 to 1889, and his many valuable contributions to its *Proceedings* and *Collections*, need not be dwelt upon. These letters show his wide historical interests, his careful investigation, and his generous aid and encouragement to the younger men. Hardly a name of those who were working in history in the United States at that period is wanting, and in some cases long series of letters prove how thoroughly he had gained the confidence of his fellow workers. Of particular value are his letters from Mr. Winthrop and other members of the Society, for they recall the great attention given to the interests of the Society and how its welfare was ever present to the minds of Deane and his associates. The collec-

tion is a necessary part of the history of the Society and of its influence in encouraging the pursuit of history in the latter half of the last century.

Rev. Charles Edwards Park, of Boston, was elected a Resident Member of the Society.

The PRESIDENT announced the appointment of the following committees, in preparation for the Annual Meeting in April:

To nominate Officers for the ensuing year: Messrs. CHARLES P. GREENOUGH, FREDERICK WINTHROP, and BLISS PERRY.

To examine the Library and Cabinet: Messrs. WILLIAM C. ENDICOTT, LINCOLN N. KINNICUTT, and HENRY G. PEARSON.

To examine the Treasurer's accounts: Messrs. HAROLD MURDOCK and HENRY H. EDES.

The PRESIDENT announced the death of Frederick Lewis Gay, a Resident Member, which occurred in Brookline, March 3, 1916. Mr. Gay was elected to the Society in January, 1914, and in his short membership had been liberal with gifts and the use of his rich materials on early New England history. His extensive collection of seventeenth century works illustrating the history of Old and New England contains unique features, for he specialized in certain lines, and, a keen collector, he succeeded to an extraordinary degree in obtaining what was rare and necessary to his purpose. These printed works he supplemented by transcripts of manuscripts from the British Museum and Public Record Office, and of them he issued a catalogue. He also bought early American portraits. Of all this material he was generous, never refusing to aid and encourage the investigator by lending his choicest pieces and giving the benefit of his own wide and thorough research. The Society gained by his membership, and it loses an active and sympathetic worker in his death.

Mr. BARRETT WENDELL showed an impression of the seal of John Paul Jones, on a letter cover addressed to John Wendell, of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. This probably contained a letter written from Nantes on December 11, 1777. If so, this impression is nearly six years earlier than that in possession of the Naval Historical Society of New York and there supposed unique. The Wendell impression now belongs to Evert Jansen Wendell, of New York.

Mr. Wendell proceeded to make some conjectural remarks



John Wendell Esquire.

Portsmouth

New Hampshire.

SEAL AND WRITING OF JOHN PAUL JONES

on the probable effect of German manners at the English court, as one of the causes of that divergence of feeling between England and the American colonies which resulted in the American Revolution, and thus in such a disruption of the British Empire as might have occurred in the United States had secession prevailed.

The Cabinet-Keeper read the following letter on a portrait in the Cabinet of the Society:

BOSTON, March 7, 1916.

DEAR SIR, — I have been interested in tracing and correctly attributing the authorship of the several portraits of Rev. Ellis Gray and at your request submit the result of my investigations.

In 1878 a paper on Jonathan Blackburn, with a partial list of his portraits, was written by Augustus Thorndike Perkins and printed in the *Proceedings* of that year. Mr. Perkins listed two portraits as follows: "Ellis Gray. There are two portraits of Rev. Ellis Gray, of half length, representing him in his robes and bands, the hair without powder. Both pictures are in the possession of his grandchildren. One is owned by Miss Anne Cary of Chelsea, the other by William Ferdinand Cary, Esq., of Boston."

At the time Mr. Perkins wrote his paper and prepared his list of portraits by Blackburn there was hanging in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society a portrait of Rev. Ellis Gray and another in the collection of the American Antiquarian Society at Worcester.

The card index of the Massachusetts Historical Society names four portraits of the Rev. Ellis Gray and, following the list prepared by Mr. Perkins, attributes them all to the hand of Blackburn. In recording four portraits of Rev. Ellis Gray the card index is correct; in attributing the portraits to Blackburn my conclusion is that a mistake was made by Mr. Perkins and his error repeated by the Society index and the owners of the other two portraits mentioned by Mr. Perkins. The portrait at the American Antiquarian Society has always been recorded as "Artist Unknown," it being a gift from William Bentley, the well-known diarist.

Bentley says in his diary, Volume III, page 368, under date of June 28, 1908: "Had the pleasure of seeing at Mr. Watson's seat in Northfield, in company with Colonel Cushing's family, a daughter of Secretary Avery, who promised her influence to obtain from Mrs. Thayer, daughter of Revd. Jackson of Brooklyn, a painting of Revd. Otis Gray, one of the ministers of New Brick Church, Boston.

Rev. Mr. Cary of Newburyport has another painting of the same person, both by Badger. This painting belonged to my grandfather and was sold for one dollar to Mr. Jackson at a public auction where the household goods were disposed of by Capt. Adams." Bentley did not make the error of referring to the minister of the New Brick Church, Boston, as Otis Gray, but the copyist of the diary is responsible for the mistake. Bentley at a later time succeeded in getting from the Rev. Joseph Jackson of Brookline the portrait at one time owned by Bentley's grandfather of Rev. Ellis Gray and which he, Bentley, says was made by Joseph Badger, and the portrait now in the possession of the American Antiquarian Society was presented by Bentley. This locates one of the pictures, and fortunately for our records, it is one of the portraits mentioned in his diary.

The portrait mentioned as belonging to William Ferdinand Cary, who was the son of Samuel and Sarah Gray Cary and the grandson of Rev. Ellis Gray, was left by him to Mrs. Hartman Kuhn, who left it to Hamilton Wilkes Cary, who left it to Mrs. R. S. Russell, whose mother, Mrs. Charles P. Curtis, was a Cary. I have seen the portrait at Mrs. Russell's house and compared it with the others.

The portrait mentioned as belonging to Miss Anne Cary of Chelsea has come down from her possession to Mrs. Russell Montague of White Sulphur Springs, Virginia, where it now is.

The fourth portrait now hangs in this Society's collection, said to be a gift from Rev. Chandler Robbins of the Second Church, once called the "New Brick Church." This and the other two portraits agree in every detail with the one named by Bentley as being by Joseph Badger, and I am therefore of the opinion that the attribution to Blackburn is an error.

Joseph Badger at the time of Mr. Perkins's article was little known, and it is only within a few years that interest has been shown in the work of this very excellent portrait painter. No record of his birth or origin has thus far been found. His estate was administered on August 23, 1765. He had studios in Boston from 1740 to 1765.

Among his portraits are those of James Bowdoin belonging to Bowdoin College and another of the same man in the Pitts Collection at Detroit. There are also portraits in existence of

Timothy Orne
Mrs. Rebecca Burrill Orne
Dudley Leavitt
Mrs. Dudley Leavitt
Daniel Mackey

Thomas Cushing
Tristram Dalton
Captain John Larrabee
John Pitts
Mary Leavitt

Mrs. Daniel Mackey
Rebecca Orne
Lois Orne
Thomas Mason
Mary Vial

Alexander Savage
Thomas Savage
James Russell
John Haskins
Mrs. John Haskins

Very truly yours,

FRANK W. BAYLEY.

Mr. CHARLES HENRY HART, a Corresponding Member, contributes the following paper on

PETER HARRISON, ARCHITECT.

Peter Harrison, the first professional architect in America, was a very important eighteenth century character in New England about whom many biographical impossibilities have been recorded in print. Chief among these are the romances that he was a pupil of Sir John Vanbrugh and one of his assistants in the building of Blenheim Castle for the Duke of Marlborough (1705-1716), and also that he was one of the companions of Bishop Berkeley on his famous visit to Rhode Island in 1728/29.¹ As Peter Harrison the architect was born the year in which Blenheim Castle was completed and had just arrived at the mature age of ten years when Vanbrugh died, which was only two years before Berkeley's voyage to this country, it will readily be seen of what value are these important statements in historical publications of repute, only a few of which are named in the footnote, and which have gone unquestioned until now. Yet, had it not been for the misstatement that Harrison was a companion of Berkeley, not only would the error have remained unchallenged and undetected by me, but the true and interesting facts of Harrison's many-sided career that have been unearthed would never have been dug out and recorded by my pen. Thus it would seem errors in published history by their refutation accomplish sometimes unlooked-for good.

¹ *Proceedings*, XII. 324; XVI. 392; Noah Porter, *200th Anniversary of the Birthday of Berkeley*, 35 and 67; Updike, *History of Narragansett Church*, II. 431; Mason, *Annals of Redwood Library*, 36; Foote, *History of King's Chapel*, II. 76 n. et seq.; Winsor, *Memorial History of Boston*, IV. 469, 470 n. For the benefit of those concerned I note as a warning that the "authority" last cited, and the same author's *Critical History of America*, are dangerous to use unless the statements are carefully verified.

In Poulson's *Daily Advertiser* for September 26, 1822, printed in Philadelphia, there appeared the report of a case of pedigree, Doe, Dem. Thomas *vs.* Acklam, that had been tried before Abbott, C. J., at the York Assize in England on July 30 of that year. The proceedings were to prove that Frances Mary Ludlow, wife of Philip Thomas of the United States of America, was heiress at law of Elizabeth Harrison, spinster, who died in Hull, England, November 26, 1818. Mr. Sergeant Hullock proved for the plaintiff that Joseph Harrison had gone from York, England, to America and been Comptroller of the Customs at Boston in 1775; that Peter Harrison, his youngest brother, followed him to America, where he died, leaving four children, all of whom died without issue, except Elizabeth, who married, at Trinity Church, Newport, October 22, 1781, James Ludlow,¹ of which marriage Mrs. Thomas was the only surviving child; that Elizabeth Harrison was the daughter and last surviving child of Joseph Harrison, the elder brother of Peter Harrison. An important and most interesting piece of evidence was a miniature of Mary Frances Ludlow (Mrs. Thomas) when a child, that had belonged to Elizabeth Harrison. The Lord Chief Justice said that "it was surprising to find a case so clearly made out at such a distance of time and place," and directed the jury to find for the plaintiff, subject to judgment on the question whether an alien could inherit the estate.² This cause was in litigation from 1820 to 1824, and the original pedigree that was used in the case is now in the possession of Mr. Shipley Jones, of New York City, a grandson of Mrs. Thomas, who has courteously allowed me to use it. So that the data here given concerning the Harrison family and their birth and death dates have the sanction of the English law courts, which puts them beyond question. The document is endorsed "Pedigree of the Parties Claiming the Property of the late Miss Harrison of Hull"; and the result of the litigation was to divide the personal property equally between the plaintiff and the defendant, with the real estate to the defendant, holding that an alien could not inherit it.

Peter Harrison, architect, was born June 14, 1716, and was the son of Thomas Harrison, Jr. (1671-1731) and Elizabeth

¹ *Rhode Island Historical Magazine*, VII. 285.

² *N. E. Hist. Gen. Register*, XXXV. 240.

Denison Harrison (1683-1753), of York, England. What education as an architect and engineer he had in England we do not know, but the earliest mention that we have found of him and of his brother Joseph Harrison in America is in the year 1745, when on April 3 Joseph Harrison, of Newport, was admitted a freeman of the Colony of Rhode Island.¹ On September 28 of this same year the Assembly "Voted and Resolved that His Honor the Governor be requested to send for Messrs. Jos. Harrison and Peter Harrison who have presented this Assembly with a handsome draught of Fort George and the Harbor of Newport very ingeniously drawn and give them the thanks of this Assembly."² A month later, on October 27, the Assembly "Voted and Resolved that the Committee that was appointed to procure a plan of Fort George and the Harbor of Newport, procure another draught or plan of said fort and harbor, exactly as the same now are, and present the same to His Honor the Governor to be signed by him and the Surveyor to be sent home . . .; and that the said committee procure a piece of plate to the value of £75 and present the same to Mr. Peter Harrison for his trouble in surveying and making a draught of said fort and harbor."³ He was now apparently well established in Newport; for on June 6, 1746, he married Elizabeth (1721-1784), daughter of Edward and Arabella Williams Pelham, whose grandmother was Godgift, daughter of Benedict Arnold, first Governor of Rhode Island. Through his wife Harrison acquired the estate subsequently known as "Harrison's Farm," in Newport, which is intersected by the present Harrison Avenue, named for the architect, and the old Harrison house remains a familiar landmark.⁴ His marriage was followed by that of his elder brother Joseph on November 25 of the same year, at Portsmouth, N. H., to Eleanor Ridgway, whose mother's name was Acklin, Acklom, or Acklam, as given in the legal proceedings.

But his marriage did not interfere with his public duties. We find the Assembly on September 29, 1746, providing that, as "the well fortifying the town of Newport and furnishing the fortifications there with war like stores are necessary for the

¹ *R. I. Col. Rec.*, v. 109.

² *Ib.*, 131.

³ *Ib.*, 153.

⁴ Communicated by Mrs. Sarah King Birkhead.

security of the Government," a sum is appropriated for "completing the new works and the alteration of the old battery adjoining to Fort George at Goat Island," and that Joseph Harrison, Peter Harrison, and eleven others named "or the major of them be established and appointed a committee to finish the said new battery or work begun."¹

We next find him engaged in that work that has preserved his name and genius fresh to the present time, and made Peter Harrison the *Doyen* of a long line of distinguished architects in this country. For he is the first professional architect who is known to have practised here. At least, without any knowledge of his early life and education in England, we must regard him from the character of his work as a thoroughly trained architect. Abraham Redwood had given a collection of books, and Henry Collins had provided a plot of ground for a library in Newport, and Peter Harrison was called upon to plan the building and make the drawings for its erection. In the original "Contract; Erection of Library Building," which is dated August 9, 1748, the body of the paper recites that it is to be erected according "to a plan or Draught drawn by Mr. *Joseph* Harrison"; but six months later "Articles for Building the Library," under date of February 6, 1748/9, stipulating for certain changes from the original "Contract," recites according "to a plan or Draught drawn by Mr. *Peter* Harrison." The "Contract" and "Articles" will be found in the appendix to Mason's *Annals of the Redwood Library* (488-491), where the "Contract" is printed without signatures, as though it had been left unexecuted, but, by referring to it in the "Articles," which is duly executed by the signatures of Samuel Wickham, Henry Collins, and John Tillinghast, it is incorporated in and made part of the later paper, the two being read together as one document.

The appearance of the name of "Joseph Harrison" in the "Contract" has caused some persons to question that Peter Harrison was the sole architect of the library building, but it seems quite clear to me that the introduction of the given name *Joseph* instead of *Peter* was a mere slip of the scrivener in engrossing the instrument, which error was considered cured, without noting, by placing the name of Peter Harrison in the later and executed "Articles." The edifice thus provided for

¹ *R. I. Col. Rec.*, v. 189.

was opened for use in 1750.¹ It is a building of classic architecture, originally a Roman temple, of the Doric order, and the exterior stands to-day as it came from the builder, only being added to in a way that does not seriously interfere with the original structure. The pediment in the front is supported by four columns beautifully curved in perfect entasis, the columns without flutings and the pediments without ornament or sculpture. The building is of wood upon a rustic basement of Connecticut brownstone and broad steps and buttresses of the same material. In the past year (1915) "the central hall has been remodelled in a manner both dignified and entirely in harmony with the features of Peter Harrison's work that remain on the earlier parts of the building."²

While engaged upon the Redwood Library building, Harrison was invited, in April, 1749, to make plans for rebuilding the King's Chapel in Boston, which, owing to a "multiplicity of business," he could not furnish until the following September, when he sent "The Plan — the Elevation of the West Front — the Elevation of the South Front — the Section — Breadthways — the Plans of the Steeple — the Plans of the Pews," with which "the committee were well pleased and accepted them."³ In addition to the library building Peter Harrison designed for Newport the Brick Market House, built in 1761, eighty years later to become the City Hall, which unfortunately has been altered into a business mart, and the Jews' Synagogue, dedicated in 1763, which is still standing in practically its original state. To be in readiness to help preserve the buildings he designed, Peter Harrison and his brother Joseph became, in 1749, members of the "Hand and Heart Fire Club" of Newport, and in September, 1750, he was one of the petitioners to the King relative to Bills of Credit.⁴ His interest in public work continued, and on January 10, 1757, the Assembly appointed the Speaker of the House and Peter Bours, Esq., "to wait on Captain Peter Harrison and render him the thanks of this government for all favors they have received from him; and in particular for the two plans of the Fort; and

¹ Mason, *Annals of Redwood Library*, 36.

² *Bulletin Rhode Island School of Design*, July, 1915, 6.

³ Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*, II. 82.

⁴ *R. I. Col. Rec.*, v. 312.

to request him to lend another of said plans unto the commissioners appointed to wait on his Excellency the Earl of Loudon at the Congress in Boston." ¹

Harrison was a pew holder in Trinity Church, Newport, in 1755, and in 1762 was an underwriter for the enlargement of the church building. The previous year Christ Church, Cambridge, Mass., was opened which had been built from his designs, and the structure was spoken of as a "masterpiece of simplicity and beauty." That he was regarded at that time as a "professional architect" seems certain from the language of the letter of thanks written by the committee to the Society for Establishing a Mission at Cambridge, November 24, 1759: "We have applied to a *masterly architect* for a plan and propose to build a handsome church of wood."² Two years later we find the brothers Harrison removed to New Haven, in the Colony of Connecticut, where in 1768 Peter Harrison was made Collector of the Customs, his brother Joseph having been given two years earlier the like office in Boston.³ In his history of Trinity Church, New Haven, Judge Crosswell tells the story,⁴ which he afterwards discredits, how "In 1768 Peter Harrison, Esq., from Nottinghamshire, in England, the King's collector at the port of New Haven, claimed his right of searching the public records," and discovered one leaf in the Will Book much thicker than the others. "He put a corner of the thick leaf into his mouth, and soon found it was composed of two leaves, which with much difficulty having separated, he found Grigson's will," thereby recovering for Trinity Church valuable real estate left to it by Thomas Gregson, an early settler who had died some years before in England. This is the last note we have on Harrison until we come to the last notice we have of all of us, the record of his death, on April 30, 1775, and his burial at Trinity Church, New Haven, on May 7.⁵ He was survived by his wife, Elizabeth Pelham, nine years, but the place of interment is unknown. By one of those odd freaks that sometimes creep into staid official records, the Probate Court,

¹ *R. I. Col. Rec.*, VI. 13.

² *Re-opening of Christ Church, Cambridge*, November 22, 1857, 22.

³ Joseph Harrison was appointed Collector of the Port of Boston, October 28, 1766.

⁴ *New Haven Hist. Soc. Papers*, I. 48-49.

⁵ *Ib.*, 59.

at New Haven, records that on May 18, 1775, "his widow *Mary* Harrison was appointed administratrix of his estate."

The careers of the brothers Harrison were so intimately associated, they being engaged together in mercantile pursuits in Newport, dealing in wines, rum, molasses, and mahogany, that it is not out of place to supplement the story of Peter Harrison's life with some incidents in the life of Joseph. He was born November 25, 1709, came to this country, as we have seen, circa 1745, and on July 4, 1748, was chosen a director of the Redwood Library. On February 24, 1749/50, the Assembly of Rhode Island named him and three others Commissioners "to run or perambulate the northern boundary line of this colony," with Massachusetts, which on March 16, 1750/51, they reported had been done.¹ He evidently had the laboring oar; for, September 6, 1756, the Assembly resolved "that the mathematical instrument now in the colony house, and which was procured by Captain Joseph Harrison for the use of the Colony, be lodged in the Redwood Library; but so that the property remains in the colony."² In January, 1762, the Governor wrote to him inquiring into a grant that the Colony asked of the Crown, and the *New London Gazette* of October 26, 1764, says that "Jared Ingersoll and Joseph Harrison of New Haven Esquires sailed from hence on *Prince Henry*, Captain Robinson, for London"; Ingersoll doubtless to look after his appointment as Stamp distributor, and Harrison for his appointment to the collectorship of the port of Boston. At all events each not very long afterward received his commission. It would seem, however, from letters in the Franklin mss. that Harrison was also intrusted with a petition to the King asking for a Royal Government for Rhode Island, which Franklin was urged to facilitate.³ Joseph and Peter Harrison were elected members of the American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia, April 1, 1768, which was looked upon in those days as equal to a crowning by the French Academy. Joseph Harrison returned to England soon after the breaking out of active hostilities in the Revolutionary War and died there January 15, 1787. He had two children born in Rhode Island, Richard Acklom (1750-1813) and Elizabeth

¹ *R. I. Col. Rec.*, v. 281, 322.

² *Ib.*, 512.

³ Letters from Martin Howard Jr. dated Newport, Nov. 16, 1764 and May 14, 1765 (American Philosophical Society).

(1759-1818). Neither married, and it was the daughter's death intestate that caused the suit at law described above and that has given the genealogical details here recorded. Portraits of Peter Harrison and of Mrs. Harrison, painted shortly after their marriage by John Smibert, are in the possession of their descendant Mr. Shipley Jones, before mentioned, of which copies were presented by the family to the Redwood Library in 1869.¹

Mr. MORISON communicated the following notes and documents on

A YANKEE SKIPPER IN SAN DOMINGO, 1797.

It was a pleasant surprise when, going through a file of very dry diplomatic correspondence in the Public Record Office at London, I discovered this picaresque letter from a Yankee skipper describing his adventures at San Domingo. Its endorsements, with the accompanying note from Sir Hyde Parker, explain how the letter got into such respectable company. The British authorities were interested in the startling information imparted to Captain Morris by the fair Nannette "in the tender hours of dalliance." These communications must not be taken too seriously, but the letter gives a realistic picture of the state of affairs at San Domingo while Sonthonax, the chief commissary of the French Republic,² was endeavoring to maintain himself against Toussaint L'Ouverture,³ and of the difficulties of neutral commerce while the French spoliations were at their height.⁴

¹ Reproductions are in Updike, *History of the Episcopal Church in Narragansett* (2d ed.). See also *Bulletin* of the New England Society for the Preservation of Antiquities, VI. No. 2. [ED.]

² Léger-Félicité Sonthonax (1763-1813), a lawyer and editor, who believed in the slave policy of Condorcet and Brissot. "Sonthonax avait une âme ferme et haute, un esprit cultivé, beaucoup de desintéressement; et c'est surtout à la constance de son dévouement à la cause de la liberté qu'il faut attribuer les persécutions et les calomnies dont il fut l'objet." E. Regnard in *Nouvelle Biographie Générale*, XLIV. 185.

³ For the historical background, see T. Lothrop Stoddard, *The French Revolution in San Domingo* (Boston, 1914), chapter XXII.

⁴ Cf. the letter of Victor Du Pont to Talleyrand, *supra*, p. 67.

ADMIRAL SIR HYDE PARKER¹ TO EVAN NEPEAN.²

QUEEN, CAPE NICOLA MOLE, 26 April, 1797.

SIR, — Singular as the enclosed Copy of a Letter may appear; I have thought proper for the information it contains, to transmit, and to desire you will be pleased to lay, it before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. I am, Sir, Your most obedient humble servant,

H PARKER.

EVAN NEPEAN ESQR.

[Endorsed] 6 June. Send Copy of enclosure to Mr. Canning³ for Lord Grenville's information.⁴

CAPTAIN SAMUEL MORRIS TO ———.

CAPE FRANCOIS, Feb^y 28th, 1797

DEAR PETER, — From our mutual friend Ruben Atkins I was surprised to hear that he was told you were carrying on a great stroke of business at Turks Island, after you wrote to us you were settled so much to your satisfaction at Surinam. At this damned Place I have been long amongst a parcel of Villains, trying to procure payment for the Merchandize taken from me by the Commissaries; at last I have succeeded — no thanks to them, but some fair friends with whom I scraped an acquaintance, and to whom I owe every thing. Without their assistance, I should, like the rest of my Countrymen, not have got a Sou. In two days, or sooner if possible, I shall leave this place, for I stand on ticklish ground I assure you; and when you have read what I am going to relate you will say it is full time to make a natural dash, if I wish to escape the Guillotine, or Lamp Post. Such a tale I have to unfold as will make you shudder, but to begin in form. You know Peter I was always a favourite with the Girls and that I have a good Person well set off by a *Je ne sais quoi* in the air or *manner*, this you must acknowledge, tho' you often told me I was a damn'd Puppy, instead of Studying law with old Square Toes to go to learn French and dancing with a New Master, when I was a complete dab at Hey Rob. and Statia⁵

¹ (1739-1807), second of that name, and then in command of the West India Station.

² The Secretary of the Admiralty.

³ George Canning was then an undersecretary in the Foreign Office, under Lord Grenville.

⁴ This document, and the following, are in the Public Record Office, F. O. 5. 21.

⁵ Probably a reference to the Dutch island of St. Eustatius, a great centre of smuggling during the American Revolution.

Girls. But this, Peter, was downright envy and jealousy in you, because your favourite Jenny Green always preferred me as a Partner. You remember how you used to swear whenever I took her by the hand at Cousin Riddle's. I hope you have left off that custom of swearing "By Zounds," "Darn it," "I swear now, Mate," as it is quite out of vogue. Well, Peter I will leave you to judge whether I have not brought my dancing and palavering French, for which you often laughed at me, to a pretty good account.

On my arrival here my Property (and a good assortment it was) was put in requisition. This I bore with a good Grace, and in good French too — mark that, Peter. I gave them, as it was needless to compliment, a sample of Democratical slang on Liberty and Equality, and when an occasion offered was the first at a Civic feast to dance and sing *Ça Ira* and the *Carmagnole*, with the best of them; instead of drawling out your *America, Commerce and Freedom*, whilst my brother sufferers with woeful faces as long as my Arm were groaning over the "Deacon's notions" and long lace. Well, what think you, Peter, I did to recover my property? Why, you made a hue and cry and put forth a lamentable petition to the Municipality. No such thing I assure you, Peter — all weeping and gnashing of teeth would answer little purpose here. Why then, I suppose you will say, I joined in a lengthy complaint to Congress. You are still wide of the mark. No, no Peter, it is not the interest of the Jockies of the Congress to advocate such a business whilst Adet¹ has any credit left with the Republic. Why then, what the Devil did you? I'll tell you, Peter — by dint of perseverance, some patriotic blarney, with a small dash of American modesty. I capered, sung and ogled myself into the good graces of Santhonax's *fair family*. There I fell on my feet let me tell you, and you may guess if I did not profit by my good fortune. By this connection I came to the knowledge of some secrets, the revelation of which will make you shudder and also shew you the peril of an intrigue with the connections of such a *Cut-Throat Rascal* and Incendiary. I almost tremble when I think of my situation here, and such has been my situation for some time past for fear of discovery that I have felt regularly every morning if my head was safe on my shoulders. I shall now proceed Peter to give you an account of my adventures here.

My fair Nannette who is a great favourite of Santhonax and affects to be a mighty Politician, and besides being as clever and knowing a Girl as your friend Dolly Tipkins, writes a good running hand, and is employed by Santhonax in copying his dispatches. She tells

¹ The French minister at Philadelphia.

me, and I think it probable, he intrusts her with all his secrets. (By-the-by, Santhonax wishes to be very intimate with her but is devilishly afraid of his Wife, who is of a jealous temper), but of this judge yourself, Peter, by what follows. Nannette, who believes me a true Democrat and that I will return to the Cape and marry her, told me in the tender hours of dalliance that Santhonax has been much disappointed in not acquiring the wealth he expected through his Wife's and his own interest with the Brigands. He has been *fouter-ing* and *peste-ing* ever since his arrival to find himself suspected and distrusted by his black friends, and his brother Commissaires who expected pretty pickings; and are mighty disappointed to see that Santhonax from not having made a fair division of the plunder of Hispaniola had become very obnoxious to the Negroes. However, Santhonax and the Commissaries are determined to realize a fortune by some means or other. In the first attempt they were baffled, which was to remove some Brigand Chiefs unfavorable to their views, and to make a number of the Negroes work in the name of the Republic for them. This step threw the whole Island into a flame and the Commissaries began to have serious apprehensions for their own safety; but they are now relieved from their fears by the severe drubbing the British gave the Brigands to the Southward which will keep them quiet from necessity — at least for a time.

On asking Nannette what could be the motive of the Executive Directory for giving orders to seize American property, she told me it was from necessity, as they could not procure friends [funds] to supply the colonies with Stores and Provisions, and that they were vexed to find the Americans would not take an active part against the British, but that they were resolved whilst the Americans were off their guard to render their enmity or friendship of little consequence to any nation. The Commissioners in their private instructions are directed to make the speediest and best use of their orders for destroying the American Commerce; and that proper instructions would be dispatched to Adet, who with the American Patriots would assign sufficient reasons for so strong a measure, that it was expected the Americans would grumble and remonstrate long before they would think of biting, but steps would be taken speedily to deprive them of the power of doing so much mischief — so that a few months at least could be gained in negociation, and in that time a sufficient quantity of Provisions and Stores would be secured, and it was expected that if this measure was speedily and well executed the American Aristocrats would be deceived, the British Credit destroy'd, and from the greatness of their loss they would be reduced to a state of equality more favourable to the interest of the Republic.

This Peter bad as you may think of it is not the worst of it, for I find from Nannette, they mean to play the same game in America they have done in the West Indies.

In a letter to Santhonax from the Executive Directory, for he is the only Commissary Nannette says they will implicitly trust, he is ordered with Adet to leave nothing untried to ruin the British and American Merchants and to employ proper Agents to execute this purpose. On my asking her in what manner, she answered by the destruction of the Depôts of Merchants in the Towns,¹ and that Santhonax had written to Adet that the best mode and least liable to detection would be to employ a few Cape Agents who were well trained, and many of them living in Seaports of America, of whom he sent Adet a List; and at the same time proposed to him, if he would undertake the business to the Northward, that he could furnish and send from the Cape a sufficient number who would volunteer it to the Southward. The business she said had been partly executed to the Southward, as some of the Agents had returned, received their reward, and gone back with fresh orders, but that little had been done to the Northward. She said Santhonax was much vexed with Adet, who he said was a pitiful Poltroon, afraid of his own shadow, for in case of any Suspicion or even discovery, he might easily shift the odium from himself to the Emigrants and British and he swore, with the Agents he pointed out to him, who were men of tried experience and fidelity, Adet might by this time have made a *feu de joie* of every Town on the Continent, instead of his paltry squibbing matter.

Did you ever hear Peter of such a couple of infernal Villains? There is not a place in Hell hot enough for them. Only think of my loss, £600 "by zounds," every Copper, for as W.* Williams who was brought in here the other day says the house Aunt Dianah left me is burnt to the Ground, as also Cousin Bens. Oh! Curse on the Rascals! how many thousands will be ruined by their damned Machinations and Plots! I would instantly I swear shoot Santhonax through the head if there was a possibility of escaping. The Commissaries expect a fine Harvest from their seizures and from what I know of them the *Republic* will be little benefited by their Acts

¹ This information, though from a source of doubtful value, would seem at first to confirm certain rumors of impending arson by French agents, that were current in the United States at this period, and made much of by the Federalist press. But there is no hint of any such plan in the correspondence between the Directory and Adet, which I have examined carefully; and Mr. T. Lothrop Stoddard, who has examined the correspondence between the Directory and the San Domingo Commissioners, tells me that no such instructions were sent to Sonthonax.

* Not clear [copyist's note].

of Piracy. No less than 167 Sail of Vessels have been seized and carried into the Cape, the out ports and Cuba since they received the Orders of the Directory, and I am sorry to say that it was from this fund the Commissaries paid me, telling me that I was a true Sansculotte and worthy of being a French citizen. Damn their Citizenship, I say. The Commissaries have given me a Pass for any Vessel and Cargo I may bring from America, and Commissioned for a number of dry goods for their families. I thought Santhonax when he gave me the order smiled, as much as to say, "Monsieur, you will find few goods in America on your return!" But Peter, if ever they catch me here again, I will give them leave to guillotine me and barbecue me into the bargain. Every Vessel they can lay their hands on, they are turning into a Privateer, and I am told the Spaniards are following their example. When I arrive I shall write to you by the first Vessel bound to Turks Island. I send this by R'd Davis who says he will forward it either from the Mole or Kingston. Do let me hear from you, Peter, as soon as you can.

I am, Peter, your true Friend and well wisher

(ss) SAM^L MORRIS.

Signed — a True Copy from the Original Taken by me at Turks Island this 3rd April, 1797.

JOHN WRIGHT

Justice of the Peace at Turks Island.

P.S. I suppose you will be sorry to hear that old Uncle Nathan is dead, and I guess of a broken heart. You know he was a great follower of the Baptists. He fell desperately in love with a Baptist Sister; you remember that Stiff Piece of Sanctity; prating Sinning Leah, who always groaned and sighed at the sight of a fiddle — the very same. By the persuasion of the Baptist Preacher (it is said) he married her 6 or 8 Months ago. My old Uncle wrote to me that he had been very lonesome since my Sister Sally had left him, and that he had taken a pious Maiden for an helpmate, and it had rejoiced his heart exceedingly that the Lord had given him a chosen vessel to be the comfort of his Age (a cracked Pitcher he meant, Peter) for would you believe it, this Pious Maiden this chosen Vessel 5 or 6 Months after they were married brought him Twins — two strapping Boys. Old Nathan never held up his head after. Joe Benson mentions to me in his letter that it was the Baptist Preacher who tipped Uncle Nathan — *an old Trader!*

(ss.) S. M.

(A True Copy) J. WRIGHT J. P.

Turks Island, 3^d April 1797.

Copied from a Copy taken by Captain Fowke of the *Swallow* Brig — from the above regularly attested one.

(Signed) A. J. SCOTT.

The Editor submitted for publication the following article by William Alexander Robinson, of Washington University, St. Louis, on

THE WASHINGTON BENEVOLENT SOCIETY IN NEW ENGLAND:
A PHASE OF POLITICS DURING THE WAR OF 1812.¹

The history of New England during the second war with Great Britain can hardly be considered inspiring even by fervent admirers of that section. For more than a decade the region had been the scene of one of the bitterest contests in the history of American politics. Jeffersonian Democracy had gradually conquered, stubbornly resisted by the local aristocracy of the towns and by the Congregational Church. Parties had been based largely on social lines, and the natural bitterness of such a division had been aggravated by religious and commercial issues. Federalists charged that the commercial policy of Jefferson and his successor had been the result of utter indifference or even of active hostility to New England interests. Republicans replied that the Federalists were more devoted to commerce than to upholding national rights. "So attached are our seaports to bargains," wrote Parson Bentley shortly before the Embargo, "that we should hardly be induced to believe that they would think of considering public liberty the best bargain."² Attachment to the cause of one or other of the great European belligerents increased antagonism, and when it seemed probable that war would soon break out with either France or England, people seemed to lose sight of their own country while defending their foreign favorites.³ When war with Great Britain finally began, it found the New England Federalists bitterly hostile to their own government. In a region which a few decades later gave freely of blood and treasure to preserve the nation, secession was openly proposed, and

¹ The Washington Benevolent Society has received only occasional mention from historians. The only connected account is Harlan H. Ballard's "A Forgotten Fraternity," *Collections of the Berkshire Historical and Scientific Society*, III. 279-298, which contains interesting descriptive material and special references to the local Berkshire society.

The attention of the present writer was first drawn to the subject in the course of a study of Jeffersonian Democracy in the New England States. Dr. Samuel E. Morison, of Harvard University, who refers to the society in his *Harrison Gray Otis*, has called his attention to certain phases of the subject, and his interest and assistance are gratefully acknowledged.

² *Diary of William Bentley*, III. 316.

³ Cf. Spooner's *Vermont Journal*, January 15, 1810: "The care of those nations, the defense of their claims, and apologies for their errors and crimes, seems to be the labor of too many of our writers."

some of its leaders engaged in discussions hardly less than treasonable. Some years after the war a Republican paper thus described the situation: "Upon the declaration of war that flame of faction which had so long been kindling, suddenly burst forth, and for a time, leveled all patriotism, all political honesty, in its progress. Every engine of abuse and scurrility was put in operation, every species of intrigue, of bribery, and corruption was practiced to draw the people into a state of open rebellion against the constituted authorities of the country, and as an incipient step to this consummation so devoutly to be wished, to make them federalists."¹ Undoubtedly the above description is exaggerated, but it contains a large element of truth.

An interesting feature of the period was the introduction by the Federalists of one of those curious organizations which have appeared at different times in American politics, attempting to further political objects under a guise of secrecy and fraternal association. The critical condition of national affairs in this period and the fact that it was one of the first important efforts of its kind lend a certain interest to the activities of the Washington Benevolent Society.

The first appearance of this organization in New England was in Rhode Island, where branches were established in 1810 in opposition to the Columbian Order or Tammany Society which had flourishing lodges among the Republicans. The *Rhode Island Republican* on July 25 warned people against them as "wolves in sheep's clothing," their real design not benevolence or fraternity, but to unite all enemies of the government and oppose the execution of Congressional laws. In the next two years the society appeared in all the New England states and numbered its members by thousands.²

Extra-legal political organizations were not popular in the United States at this time. Parties felt constrained to keep their operations secret and had shown great joy in exposing the operations of their opponents who were unprincipled enough to maintain a committee system for getting out the voters. A tremendous uproar had been raised a few years earlier when sympathizers with Revolutionary France had organized the Democratic Clubs. An interesting comment on the appearance of the new society runs:

Who but remembers the uproar which agitated the whole continent a few years ago, at the formation of several small societies for the purpose of counter-acting the policy and designs of Hamilton and his Junto. These were then represented as formidable conspiracies against Government, nurseries of rebellion, threatening the demolition of order and regular subordination. The strong arm of power was exerted to crush them in their infancy. . . . The very authors of

¹ *National Aegis*, September 22, 1819.

² See M. W. Jernegan, *The Tammany Societies of Rhode Island*, 29.

the outcry are now incorporating themselves into societies for the purpose of overawing the Administration and spreading disaffection of their authority. . . . What would be said if the government should attempt to put the confederates down? What would be said at a revival of the Sedition Law?¹

A great change in American political consciousness since the Federalist era is shown by the absence of any such repressive action.

It is not easy to trace the establishment of an order of which secrecy was an essential characteristic, but the Republican press furnishes considerable evidence of its operations. Contemporaries seem to have been ignorant of its origin. Some attributed it to Baltimore, others to Philadelphia, still others to Canada.² Mathew Carey, regarding Boston as the headquarters of all political iniquity, claimed it had also originated this treasonable society.³ As a matter of fact, it was organized in New York in 1808 for the purpose of contesting the growing power of the Tammany Society.⁴ Some years earlier, Alexander Hamilton had suggested, as a method of meeting the encroachments of democracy, a great social and political organization which should include all classes in its membership and give the natural leaders a chance to exert their influence. The society embodied a number of his ideas.

Except for the Rhode Island branches, the order appears to have entered New England across the New York line. Many societies were established in Vermont in 1811, while, with the exception of a branch at Pittsfield, the order does not seem to have made much progress in Massachusetts and New Hampshire until the spring of 1812. "It is like Henry and the Canada thistle, making its way from north to south," declared a Boston paper soon after a branch had been organized in the latter town.⁵ Vermont was a stronghold of Republicanism, and the Federalists undoubtedly hoped that the Washington Benevolent Society would prove a valuable aid in regaining control. In August, 1811, it was announced that secret societies were being established "from the Canada line to New York" with the object of favoring British commerce, opposing re-

¹ *National Aegis*, November 7, 1810.

² *New Hampshire Patriot*, March 2, 1813, April 4, 1815; *Independent Chronicle*, April 23, 1812; *Boston Patriot*, April 1, 1812. *The Green Mountain Farmer*, published at Bennington, Vermont, February 25, 1812, urges as a reason for the conquest of Canada "their incitements to secret treasonable societies among us" and because it served as an asylum for "counterfeiters and villains."

³ *The Olive Branch*, 481.

⁴ Harlan H. Ballard, *A Forgotten Fraternity*, 290.

⁵ *Independent Chronicle*, April 23, 1812. A reference to John Henry, the British spy, whose disclosures had recently been purchased by President Madison in the hope of discrediting the Federalist leaders of New England. These documents were of little value, but were exploited by the press in such a way as to arouse considerable feeling.

publicanism, securing a separation of the states, and uniting all local opposers of the government.¹ Later in the year it was reported that a convention of members had met at Vergennes and that many town societies had sent representatives.² In February another paper states that "fever among the Windham county members has produced effects similar to hydrophobia in the canine race" and that they were "running from town to town" establishing local units of the order.³ Two months later it is declared that the societies are to be found in almost every town in the state, many of them having been quietly established during the preceding December "by Parson Blaisdell from Montpelier" under pretence of improving morals.⁴

During the same winter there was great activity in Massachusetts. The *National Aegis*, on March 25, reports that two eminent Federalists of Worcester had gone the preceding week "all the way to Northampton and there together with twenty-five others were initiated into the mysteries of the Secret Association." The Federalist paper a week later congratulates the town on the introduction of "this excellent and highly respectable society" which already had a membership of "upwards of one hundred of our most respectable citizens."⁵ This incident is typical of what was happening all over the state.⁶ In New Hampshire at the same time it is reported that the societies "are springing up like mushrooms in the shade, in the principal towns where can be found a sufficiency of political imposters to make a respectable number."⁷ The society made little effort apparently to enter the District of Maine. The latter was a stronghold of radical Republicanism, bitterly opposed to Massachusetts Federalism, and intensely loyal to the national Administration. It is reported that Fryeburg had the only branch of the society to be found in the District.⁸ In Connecticut Republicanism was exceedingly weak. Jefferson's followers had made strenuous efforts to overthrow the Federalist oligarchy which controlled state politics, but had made little headway. Apparently Federalist supremacy was too secure to need the assistance of the societies, and although a number were established in the state, they do not seem to have attracted much attention.⁹

¹ *Green Mountain Farmer*, Bennington, August 5.

² *Washingtonian*, December 9, 1811.

³ *Vermont Republican*, February 10, 1812.

⁴ *Ib.*, April 6.

⁵ *Massachusetts Spy*, April 1.

⁶ *Boston Yankee*, April 3.

⁷ *New Hampshire Gazette*, April 14.

⁸ *Eastern Argus*, March 17, 1814. Among the papers of the Boston Society, however, there is a letter requesting assistance in establishing a branch at Hallowell.

⁹ *Connecticut Courant*, March 1, 1814.

What were the professions of the organization? The Massachusetts Historical Society has preserved the records of the Boston branch, and there may be found its constitution. The preamble, like so many Federalist documents, goes back to the golden age of Washington's administration, when "the people were prosperous in their industry, the government was respected by foreign nations, and the commercial prosperity, the wealth and the power of the United States were augmented to a degree without precedent and beyond the most sanguine expectation." Then came the evil days of Democracy, when wicked men misled the people. To restore the old-time conditions, therefore, the society was pledged "to support the constitution of the United States in its original purity, to have the government administered with fidelity, wisdom, and ability, to oppose all encroachments of Democracy, Aristocracy, or Despotism," etc. Besides these general objects, the society pledged itself to relieve cases of individual distress among citizens, to care for Revolutionary veterans and their dependents, and to inculcate the precepts of Washington in the minds of the rising generation.¹

Contemporary opinion refused to accept the organization's professions of benevolent purposes, and existing evidence does not show much activity of that sort. The records of the Boston society show only two or three trifling gifts for charitable purposes. "The credulous are made to believe that benevolence is the grand object," says a Vermont critic. "Some acts of charity are undoubtedly performed to blind the eyes of their deluded followers and to stimulate others to become members."² A few months later a complaint is made in the same state that there is little charitable work being done, and yet one society could spend \$140 for silk flags and badges.³ "Who has heard of a solitary instance of their benevolence since they were organized?" runs the challenge of a Massachusetts contemporary.⁴ Another comments on the fact that few paupers were to be found in the localities where the societies were most numerous (northern New England), and that the existing institutions, Masonic and public, could take care of the few cases of want occasionally to be found.⁵ A Berkshire writer compares the charity of Bain-

¹ See *Boston Yankee*, April 30, 1813. In regard to education, "They have collected a number of children and led them to be educated like Colts to the menagerie, to be bridled with restraints, to be saddled with prejudices, and jockeyed about by party spirit. When trained sufficiently in this charity school, they are to be bound out to Faction to learn the trades of Sedition and Treason."

² *Vermont Republican*, February 24, 1812.

³ *Green Mountain Farmer*, December 2, 1812.

⁴ *National Aegis*, August 12, 1812.

⁵ *Independent Chronicle*, April 23, 1812. See also *Boston Patriot*, April 18, 1812.

bridge and the crew of the *Constitution* who from their scanty pay contributed \$400 to the widow of the sailing master, while a gathering of over two thousand "Benevolents" at Stockbridge raised but \$73 for a fellow member who had recently lost his entire property by fire.¹ Some charitable work was undoubtedly performed and in the list of subscribers for the relief of fire sufferers in Portsmouth in 1814 appear the names of eight local societies, some of them for considerable amounts.²

That the societies were mainly political in character there can be no doubt. "Their leaders have denied that their object is political. It is as evident as the sun at midday that their objects are not only political, but intended to overthrow the present republican administration."³ So runs a New Hampshire attack. "Who will believe that great men have backed the order from motives of benevolence? It is for the purpose of giving energy and efficiency to the operations of a Junto and effecting an organized and systematic opposition to the government."⁴ These are the words of a Boston editor. "It is a party society, anti-Republican, anti-Washingtonian, anti-Federal, anti-American," declares the *National Aegis*, September 16, 1812. The Federalist press says little about the objects of the association, but the records of the Boston branch furnish conclusive evidence of political character. A letter from a group of Federalists in Marblehead, May 21, 1812, requesting assistance in organizing a local branch, incidentally remarks: "The work of regeneration appears to have commenced among the misled citizens of this place and we wish to afford all the assistance in our power to carry it on to perfection." Marblehead had been a centre of Republican strength. Similar in tone is a letter requesting the same assistance in Plymouth County, dated April 20, 1812. The letter states that the project will be taken up at a party meeting in the course of a few days, and comments on the desirability of establishing branches in every town, reporting to the county officers, who in turn would be "the medium of intelligence to the Head Quarters of Good Principles." "I am seriously of opinion," says the writer, "that if this plan could become universal in each County in the State, by the next year good men would be restored to their stand-

¹ *Pittsfield Sun*, April 1, 1813. "The Prince Regent Malevolent Society."

² *Portsmouth Oracle*, April 16, 1814.

³ *New Hampshire Patriot*, May 3, 1814. Cf. March 2, 1813. "They form an important part in that system of organized opposition that threatens the dissolution of your Union, the subversion of your government, and the destruction of your liberties."

⁴ *Boston Patriot*, May 6, 1812. For comment on the efforts of the Federalists to carry Vermont, see *Vermont Republican*, June 8, 22, 1812.

ing in its concerns.”¹ And a few years later, a proposal to dissolve the society confesses “that the political purposes for which the society was instituted had been fully accomplished.”² It is difficult to judge as to the actual results of its activity, but from the alarm and dislike expressed by its opponents it would seem to have been decidedly effective. Berkshire County was carried by the Federalists for the first time in twelve years as a result of its work, according to a Republican authority.³

The membership of the society seems to have been all inclusive. The Republicans quoted with great indignation the remark of one of the founders to the effect that its great object was “to collect together the Gentlemen and separate them from the Democrats.”⁴ This exclusiveness does not seem to have been followed in actual practice. The constitution of the Boston society provides for the free admission of those who may be unable to pay the regular fees, which were usually one dollar initiation and the same for annual dues. A widely quoted exposé by Sylvester Pond, of Castleton, Vermont, states in regard to the membership, “I can truly say they have some of the best and some of the worst.” According to him, the character of no candidate was examined, and drunkards, liars, and still more unsavory characters were freely admitted.⁵ The *Boston Patriot*, July 15, 1815, describes how “the neediest and meanest of the people” were attracted by means of gifts. In New Hampshire “the distribution of largesses and the insidious employment of constantly accumulating funds” were reported to have similar objects.⁶ Bentley states “the body of these associations is of young lawyers and Merchant clerks.”⁷ Probably a large number of the members were young.⁸ Considerable social ill feeling resulted from the spread of the organization. Pond states that “they are the cause of great differences in societies, churches, neighborhoods,

¹ Both the above letters are found in a volume of miscellaneous documents of the Boston branch, now in possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

² Records of Standing Committee, 74, February 8, 1821.

³ *New Hampshire Patriot*, March 4, 1814.

⁴ *Boston Patriot*, May 6, 1815. “Democrat” was still a term of reproach.

⁵ *Independent Chronicle*, April 16, 1812. Cf. *Vermont Republican*, February 24, 1812. “Tories, monarchists, and aristocrats are received with open arms without regard to character or reputation.”

⁶ *New Hampshire Patriot*, March 2, 1813.

⁷ *Diary*, iv. 87. He describes the Washington’s birthday celebration of the Salem branch as distinguished by “rude toasts and political insults,” after which “they sallied at midnight into the streets yelling and destroying property as a proof that they held fast to the rules of good order and public peace.”

⁸ Cf. *New Hampshire Patriot*, March 2, 1813. “The novelty of these societies has excited numbers to join them, particularly the young and credulous. Upon this portion of the society they rest their principal hopes for success.”

and even in private families." Another report states that "Churches are separating, dissolving, and dismissing their pastors in various places amidst the ravages of disunion in consequence of the Washington Benevolent Societies."¹

The Republicans at first viewed the spread of the societies with alarm, which later seems to have changed to ridicule and dislike. On April 14, 1812, the *New Hampshire Gazette* remarks: "The establishment at the present crisis of our public affairs of this institution with branches in several parts of the union is seriously alarming and demands watchfulness and careful inspection by the friends of liberty." In Vermont a Republican meeting was called at Windsor "for the purpose of investigating and enquiring into the origin, progress, and designs of certain secret self-created societies in various sections of our country." The resolutions adopted by this gathering condemn the associations as seditious and treasonable and warn all good citizens to be on guard against them.² Not long after, there appears a call for Republicans to organize "committees of safety" in every town, inasmuch as the Benevolents were actively working for a separation of the states.³ Resolutions adopted by conventions in a number of different localities have the same tone.⁴

The *National Aegis* on August 12, 1812, declared that ridicule would be the most successful weapon "against the puerile, ridiculous ostentation of the mushroom Washington Clubs which are springing up in all parts of the land." Ridicule did play a large part in the campaign against them. Republican newspapers, orators, and pamphlets found abundant material for satire. One of the most amusing satires is entitled "The First Book of the Washington Benevolents, otherwise called the Book of the Knaves," published in Boston in 1813 and followed at intervals by second, third, and fourth "books." The preface to the fourth book which appeared in 1814 comments on the success of the preceding volumes as "an exposure of hypocrisy and fraud," and declares that "it proves that folly and deception, although they may for a time, by the aid of Roses, Flags, and other Baubles lead the weak and unthinking

¹ *Vermont Republican*, June 1, 1812. The *Pittsfield Sun*, April 1, 1813, complains that the societies have carried partisanship to the point where non-members were not allowed to take part in the funeral ceremonies of Federalists.

² *Vermont Republican*, March 9, 1812. . . .

³ *Green Mountain Farmer*, July 10, 1812; see also November 18.

⁴ See *New Hampshire Patriot*, February 23, 1813. The resolutions of the Fourth Senatorial District meeting charge the societies with secessionist activity. *Pittsfield Sun*, March 25, 1813; Berkshire County resolutions, *Boston Patriot*, September 12, 1812, Worcester County. March 21, 1813, Plymouth County resolutions.

astray, must eventually give way to the power of truth, and the sharpest of all weapons, the power of ridicule.”¹

In 1815 it was suggested that Union Societies with Committees of Vigilance should be formed throughout New England to stimulate loyalty and check any further secessionist tendencies. Circulars proposing such an organization were sent around, but the great change in feeling which accompanied the return of peace seems to have caused the abandonment of the project.²

The public exercises of the society readily lent themselves to ridicule. These took the form of processions on Washington's Birthday, the anniversary of the first inauguration, or the Fourth of July, usually composed of a militia escort, guests, the officers of the society, boys in uniform wearing wreaths and carrying copies of the farewell address, and the divisions of the society, each with its marshals and banners bearing allegorical devices. Great pomp and ceremony attended the Boston celebration of April 29, 1812, when nine divisions were in line. Standards emblematic of such subjects as Independence, Commerce, Peace and a variety of others were carried.³ This was a type of exercises which occurred at various points in all the New England States throughout the war period.⁴ In 1814 the *Boston Patriot*, April 30, suggests that the procession should take the form of a funeral for “Rebellion,” and appropriate mottoes for their standards would be “Separation of the States,” “Northern Confederacy,” “No Essential Injury,” “Bulwark of Religion,” etc., allusions to utterances of Massachusetts Federalists.

¹ There is a copy of this rare pamphlet in the American Antiquarian Society Library at Worcester. It is throughout a parody on the Biblical Chronicles. An extract describing a “Benevolent” banquet in Boston follows:

“Book II, Chapter VIII, verse 2: And it had well nigh drawn to the third watch of the night, and the morning was beginning to break in the East.

“3. And many of the assemblage, by reason of the strong drink which they had swallowed, reeled to and fro like drunken men.

“4. And their tongues were in continual motion but the words which they uttered were not distinct, and verily it seemed as they had mittens upon them.

“5. And they were exceeding noisy and sang songs and swore oaths, and did commit other acts of folly and wickedness.

“6. Yea, they took the vessels of glass which contained the wine and the other liquors, and did throw them at the heads of each other. . . .

“10. And the watchmen who guarded the city, hearing the uproar, rushed in among them.

“11. And some fled one way and some another, and some were lying motionless on the ground like men slain in fighting.”

² *New Hampshire Patriot*, April 4, 1815; also *Boston Patriot*, February 15, 1815, the latter drawing its ideas from Carey's *Olive Branch*.

³ *Columbian Centinel*, April 29, May 2, 1812.

⁴ See *Boston Patriot*, May 4, 1814, April 29, 1815. *Boston Aegis*, June 19, 1812.

The procession ought also to include mules bearing the reversed boots and spurs of John Henry and Copenhagen Jackson, and as rear-guard "an Ass, bearing full length Portraits of the Whole Group."

The public exercises were usually followed by an oration and that in turn by a banquet. Toasts drunk at the Newburyport banquet on Washington's Birthday, 1813, are suggestive of Federalist opinion at this time. "The Tree of our Liberties — May the Apes of French policy no longer suspend themselves from its branches, nor the Jackalls of the French Emperor repose in its shade"; "The Thirteen old United States — We object to resigning our Birthright for a hotchpotch with our Red Brethren and prairie dogs," the latter an allusion to the admission of Western states.¹

The orations delivered before the societies form part of the huge Federalist literature that has accumulated in New England libraries. Sermons, newspapers, broadsides, pamphlets, orations printed by request — all are distinguished by pessimism and distrust in American institutions. They look backward, not to the future. The tone adopted by the society's orators is interesting, as it apparently represents the opinion of the members and justifies to a considerable degree the charges of their opponents. Josiah Quincy, in an oration of 1813, urges the commercial states "to prove they at least have the will to be free. . . . If relief come, and permanent security, it must come from ourselves." Daniel Webster, in an oration on July 4, 1812, expressly repudiates any idea of resistance and insurrection, but is emphatic as to New England's grievances. Similar in tone is one delivered on the same date in Plainfield, Vermont, by Samuel Prentiss. The oration of R. H. Dana, Cambridge, July 4, 1814, laments "the shame, the hardships, the declining virtue of this once proud and happy people." Of a more radical type is the Washington's birthday oration of Josiah Dunham at Windsor, Vermont, 1814. There is a savage attack on the war policy of the Madison Administration, and a comparison is made between the tyranny of the Democrats and that of George III, the same remedy being justifiable in both cases. "The unfeeling Harrison, who could feast his eyes and glut his vengeful soul" on the sight of burning Indian villages, is cited as an example of the spirit animating the war party. Then come the customs officials who were trying to suppress trade with the enemy, "a pimping, privileged spy at almost every corner." "I would adhere to the Union as long as the Union affords equal protection to its political members. . . . There is a point beyond which its Friends in New England cannot go. There

¹ *National Aegis*, March 3, 1813. Some other toasts and rhymes are decidedly coarse and indecent.

are two things dearer to the Whigs of the North than the Union, COMMERCE and FREEDOM." With audiences listening to and applauding such utterances, it is not surprising that the Republicans questioned their loyalty.¹

The societies flourished throughout the first two years of the war, but there seems to be a decline in their activity in 1814. The members were charged with a variety of offences during the war. Says the author of the "Fourth Book of the Washington Benevolents" in his preface, "The Benevolent Society men have been detected in aiding the enemy. Nine tenths of all the evasions of law have been committed by Washington Benevolents; nine tenths of all the smugglers are members of that society," etc. Captain Isaac Hodsden, Thirty-third United States Infantry commanding at Stewartstown, New Hampshire, reported that he had secured evidence that "almost every man of the Peace Party, alias Washington Benevolent Society, in this vicinity has been concerned in this unlawful trade with the enemy."² Similar offences were said to be common in Vermont.³ Undue interest in and charity for British prisoners is a subject of complaint in Massachusetts.⁴ Discouragement of enlistments is another alleged offence of the New Hampshire members.⁵ That all of these offences occurred in New England during the war is unquestionable, but it is only fair to state that there is no evidence beyond their opponents' charges to show that the societies were concerned therein.

After the close of the war the society ceases to attract attention, although it lasted for some years in a moribund condition. "The ridiculous farce which has been got up for two or three years past, under the name of 'Washington Benevolence' has this year very properly been hissed off the stage," says the *Boston Patriot*, February 24, 1816. "We saw no great nor little boys with fantastical wreaths and roses, no army with banners; no horses, mules, or asses." The same issue records "That the measure of their degradation may be full to overflowing, we learn from Philadelphia that a Washington Benevolent Society for colored people has been there

¹ All the above orations are to be found in the remarkable pamphlet collection of the American Antiquarian Society. See also oration of Andrew Bigelow, Cambridge, 1814; Lewis Bryce, Templeton, Vermont, 1813; L. Knapp, Newburyport, Massachusetts, 1812; Abiel Holmes, Cambridge, 1813.

² *New Hampshire Patriot*, March 29, 1814. Cf. April 5. "In the two upper districts of Coos County which border on the Province of Lower Canada, the most wicked and damnable treachery and intercourse has been practised with the enemy by the Washington Benevolents of that and other parts of the State."

³ *Vermont Republican*, March 23, 1814; see also June 29, 1812.

⁴ *National Aegis*, December 15, 1813.

⁵ *New Hampshire Gazette*, September 21, 1813.

instituted." The society of Windsor County, Vermont, had been advertised as "Dispersed and Strayed" some months earlier.¹ The records of the Boston branch show that it practically ceased to exist as a society in 1816. Occasional meetings of the standing executive committee are recorded at long intervals, until in 1824 formal dissolution occurred, its property going to the Bunker Hill Monument Association. Little information is to be had about the large number of rural societies, although in Worcester County occasional notices of meetings and celebrations appear until 1819.² The fact that no attention is paid them by the Republican press would indicate that they were wholly innocuous.

A great change came over New England politics after the war. The bitterness which characterized the last two decades died out. When President Monroe visited New England in 1817 it was recorded by the *Boston Patriot* (July 9) that he seemed to have wholly allayed the storms of party. "People now meet in the same room who would before scarcely pass in the same street. . . . It is found that citizens in opposite parties are not so unworthy reciprocal respect as before they were thought to be, and that each have qualifications which entitle them to the esteem of the other."

But the change has an even greater significance. The spirit of the Washington Benevolent Society is not that of nineteenth century Americanism. Its railing at the admission of Western states, its blind devotion to foreign commerce, were as absurdly out of place in American politics as its badges, chaplets, and other mummery. With the war came a national spirit, pride in the achievements of American arms, and confidence in the future of American institutions. Perhaps there is no better summary of the changes in progress than one which appeared while the war was still in progress, and which is presented as what "a true disciple of Washington" would have said to those who wished to honor his memory. "Our people had been intoxicated by trade. Englishmen, English books, English fashions, English games, and English vices were changing the character of our people; the war aroused us from lethargy." The nation was breaking asunder "those chains which in the form of manufactured goods were binding us to our oppressors." "A new, great permanent interest is arising in our country, in the per-

¹ *Boston Patriot*, August 5, 1815.

² *Massachusetts Spy*, May 20, 1818; March 31, November 4, December 29, 1819. There is in the Massachusetts Historical Society a manuscript copy of the constitution of the Washington Benevolent Society for the County of Worcester, adopted in a meeting of delegates from the societies of Barre and Petersham, Winchendon, Athol, Templeton, Royalston and Westminster and Princeton, held at Templeton, March 5, 1813.

sons of our raisers of wool, cotton, hemp, etc. and of our capitalists who are calling into activity all the arts and powers which genius has contrived for diminishing labor." Foreign commerce intoxicated, "our own great internal trade will not intoxicate; it will be natural, it will become habitual, and once fostered it will never decay. Our own lands, mines, forests, lakes, and rivers are now, instead of foreign countries, to be explored; all the profits will be our own; we shall have no risks or perils to insure against. . . . This is so plain, so just, so reasonable, and so American, that we need no gaudy parades, painted banners, white roses, sounding music, or theatrical machinery to fix it in the minds of our children." ¹

Remarks were made during the meeting by Messrs. WENDELL, NORCROSS, and SANBORN.

¹ *Boston Patriot*, May 11, 1814. "Sallust."